

Abroad

Seoul

Diplomatic Danger

Will France be the first major Western power to extend diplomatic recognition to North Korea? That is a rumor circulating persistently here, and the stakes are high for all concerned. The rumor evokes some credence—President François Mitterrand visited the North Korean capital of Pyongyang shortly before his election last year, and the North Koreans have recently established a trade mission in Paris. But the gesture, whatever value it might have for a Socialist government in the West, carries a threat of serious reaction, especially in the commercial sphere. South Korea does big business with the French, to the amount of half a billion dollars a year, and has been lately dickering for the construction of two French nuclear reactors. In addition, the French are interested in contracts for subways in Seoul and Pusan, for a steel mill, a gas liquefaction plant, satellites for transmitting the 1988 Olympic Games, and so forth. Such enterprises and projects, South Korean government sources say, would be gravely jeopardized if Paris recognized Pyongyang. Such recognition might, however, gain some tolerance from South Korea if there are sufficient counterweights, for instance, the wholesale recognition of South Korea by the Eastern bloc countries, and the admission of South Korea into the United Nations as a separate state—something that North Korea, China, and the Soviet Union, insistent on following the united-Vietnam model, strongly oppose. Since these things are hardly within the reach of a French government, the point is moot. Nor did the recent visit here of French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson do anything to clarify it. Meanwhile, French business interests here in the South Korean capital are worried that the Mitterrand government would be trading the present profitable commercial reality for the shadow of political prestige, if that is what the recognition of North Korea could be said to entail.

Peking

Chinese Lamps

Red China has started to ship crude oil to the United States. If it is found acceptable by American refinery standards, it may become an important element in the United States' energy consumption, but there is as yet no way of knowing how important. The oil was reported sold at prices competitive with oil produced by the Middle Eastern OPEC countries. There is still no hard estimate of the potential of Chinese wells, but oil sources say the amount available for export could increase considerably. The Chinese oil is described as heavy sweet crude, something like the oil produced by Indonesia.

Tripoli

Collapse

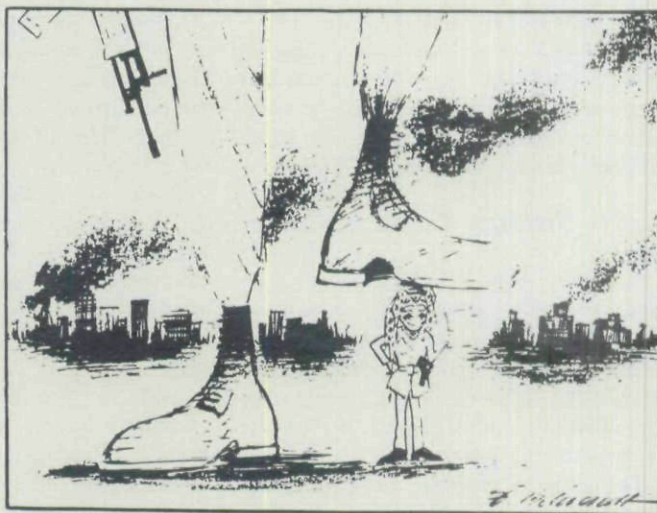
The collapse of the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity that was scheduled to take place here at the beginning of August is having repercussions throughout the continent. It is especially being viewed as a powerful rebuke to the Organization's current president, Libyan dictator Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi. For the first time in its his-

tory, the OAU failed to assemble a quorum for such a meeting, with 19 chiefs of state or government boycotting the session. Only 17 heads of OAU countries showed up in the Libyan capital. They did attempt to carry on in a rump session, but the façade of the OAU has been badly cracked. The trouble began last year when the "progressive" members voted to admit the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, a grouping which under the better-known name of Polisario is fighting a guerrilla war with Morocco for control of the western Sahara. Some of the moderate African states, in sympathy with Morocco, resented this move, and they were joined by other governments hostile to Qaddafi himself and his attempts to subvert established authority in neighboring states. Still others saw the mission of the OAU as the independence of Namibia and did not want the summit meeting to be preoccupied with the Sahara question. Qaddafi tried vainly to prevent the summit's demise by such moves as the ostentatious removal of Libyan troops from the civil war in Chad. But his failure to convince a majority of African rulers of his intentions tells its own story. His expenditure of the relatively enormous sum of \$200 million on the installation of the conference itself appears to have been largely wasted.

London

Falklands Future

A British airline, British Atlantic Airways, is planning a package tour to the Falkland Islands, and although there are certain obstacles—for example, the landing strip at Port Stanley is short for passenger jets—there is plenty of enthusiasm. The idea of tourists' going to the Falklands existed before the recent war for their possession between Britain and Argentina. Now there are believed to be many military amateurs in Britain who would like to see the scenes of British victories, have a look for example at Goose Green and follow the path of the Second Parachute Regiment. The Falkland environment would also provide a considerable draw. "We want to attract people with rucksacks," an airline spokesman said. "Nature is big out there, penguins, birds, seals." The one-way fare to the Falklands from London has been tentatively set at £650 (\$1,105), but a special tourist-class roundtrip may soon be offered at £800 (\$1,360) for an excursion of between 14 and 28 days.



Behrendt, *Het Parool*

Rotheo

"Maybe we'll recognize the existence of Israel . . ."

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